

THE BRIDGE WHIST TABLE.

CONVENTIONS IN THE GAME AS USED IN ENGLAND.

Differences Between the Practices There and Here—Meaning of the Echo Sign—In England—Advantages of the American System—English View of Women Player in General.

It is the common opinion in England that it was the abuse of conventions that ruined whist, and that when these conventions got to be so numerous that it required a special edition of the game and followed them, the game became unpopular and needed only the offer of a good substitute to take its place. Bridge came along about this time and was at once hailed as the very thing, such passing sentiment as might be said to have failed to catch the popular fancy.

"Hellespont," the latest writer on the game, tells us that "the obvious reason why bridge has caught the popular fancy to such an extent, at the expense of whist, is on account of its comparative simplicity. Modern whist has reached such a high pitch of scientific excellence that the test of thousands that habitually play, 1 per cent. would be a liberal estimate of the number that are really first class. There is seldom equality, and men do not care to occupy a position of permanent inferiority in a partnership of two and to be constantly cognizant of reminder of the fact that the possession of a little more knowledge on their part might materially affect the result of many a game."

In bridge, on the other hand, men do not find themselves so inferior in the play of the cards, and they prefer it accordingly. In short, the keynote of the popularity of bridge is its easiness. It is easy to learn and easy to play.

John Doe, a well-known writer, does not seem to think that it is quite so simple as this. He says: "The essence of good bridge is never to exasperate your partner intentionally. The exasperation of one partner is impossible of avoidance, but if there be in bridge conventional declarations, leads, returns and second-hand plays, it should always be possible to obtain a fair idea of what your partner wants you to do, and to do it. An exasperated partner is a terrible power for evil. Sometimes he seems to lose the game intentionally, merely that he may declare that it was all your fault. Unless his idea of the game is certain to prove fatal it is better to keep him in the game by following his idea than to ask him to abandon it for yours."

But without conventions it is impossible to know what his idea is. It was not until whist conventions had settled down that what became a scientific game and ladies gave it up. It was not until the women of the game had settled down that the game died a natural death. Therefore, it is that I consider that bridge should have its own conventions, and that its conventions should become settled."

"The more widely conventions become recognized, the purer and simpler will be the game of bridge become. There is no danger of destruction to the game through conventionality; the infinite variety of possible combinations will always prevent this, but there is danger that unless whist conventions become more or less stereotyped, bridge will lose its popularity for this reason; that it is as yet impossible to know what may happen to you in strange company."

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to echo according to the American fashion to show the queen, if he had it, as that card cannot be regarded as good for the third round, because the weak hand would not be able to follow suit.

According to the English fashion, which simply invites a force, unless he is able to go over the best trump that Y could put out, it would be ridiculous for B to echo with two of the suit, inviting his partner to force him, unless he could either trump Y or compel Y to part with a valuable trump which would make some trump in B's hand good for a trick, which it would not be good for if Y could make sure of the trick with a small trump.

Trick 4. It is easy to choose the only chance that A has of getting in to give B another ruff, and it should be equally clear to A that he is still able to overtrump Y.

If B does not use the down-and-out echo, the hand will go like this:

TRICK. A. B. Y. B. Z.

1. K. Q. 10. 7. 2. 5. 8. 4. 6. 10. 9. 3. 1. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 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